342 where Mestizo influence is marked. Nevertheless, in some towns, such as Capacuaro, almost the only nonwooden structure is the church. Structures of wood also occur in the other districts, although they are relatively rare.

The difference in materials used apparently has a geographic basis. The Sierra region has abundant forests, while often lacking sufficient water to permit easy manufacture of adobes or

[continued on p. 7b]

The Town of Cherán THE TOWN

361 The town of Cherán lies at the head of a broad
133 valley about 1,300 feet (400 m.) above the valley floor at an elevation of 8,500 feet (2,500 m.) (pl. 1, lower). The terrain slopes rather steeply toward the west. A small ravine forms the western half of the south boundary of the town; the eastern half of the south boundary lies beyond the ravine. A much larger ravine forms the north boundary of the town. A branch of this ravine runs through the town and partly isolates the northeast *barrio*, or *cuartel*. Springs at the bottom of this ravine
[312] afford part of the water supply. A pipe-and-wooden-trough system also brings water from a spring 9¼ miles (15 km.) away to cement tanks in the approximate center of the town as well as to a fountain in the plaza, which lies north of the center.
[135] At the northeast is a small cinder cone, which affords most of the stone used for buildings and fences. The town encroaches on the slopes of the cone on the east and south. The northeast *barrio*, or *cuartel*, climbs part way up the slopes of another cinder cone.

363 Most of the streets of the town are oriented to the cardinal directions, and the central part of town is subdivided into rectangular blocks. In some sections irregularities of the terrain have led to modifications of the block plan; in these sections streets may follow the curving contours. Streets vary in width from mere pathways to about 40 feet (12.2 m.). In the heart of town they are often paved with small cobblestones and have a central drain or gutter. Stone-paved sidewalks are common in the middle of town. The main north–south street is traversed by the Carapan-Uruapan highway and was paved with oil macadam in 1940.

[p. 7a] [continued bottom of page 7-b]

133 prominent landmarks in the area: Cerro de Tancítaro (12,660 feet), Cerro de Patamban (12,300 feet), Cerro de Quinseo (10,800 feet), Cerro el Zirate (10,955 feet). The flanks of these [135] mountains are composed mainly of andesite with some pinkish rhyolite near the summits; small veins of mineral-bearing quartz sometimes occur within the andesite. Conical shape and radial drainage characterize these volcanoes, but most craters have been destroyed by erosion. Frequently erosion of soft consolidated ash situated between andesite flows has formed caves, which have acquired importance in Tarascan folklore.

Cinder cones and lava flows, Pleistocene to Recent in age, represent the younger forms in the Sierra. The entire area is dotted with cones, 250 to 700 feet high, with no apparent alinement. Most are composed of semiconsolidated ash, cinder, and large blocks of explosion remnants. Two types of cones occur: (1) the symmetrical cone with a well-developed, flat-floored crater, and (2) the breached cone, with one side partially destroyed, initially by explosion or lava flow and subsequently by erosion. Some cones are ribbed by radial drainage; others carry scars of surface slips; owing to porous surface materials, a few show little effects of erosion, in spite of high (35°–45°) angle slopes.

Basaltic lava flows, originating usually from Pleistocene or Recent fissures in the sides of old volcanoes or occasionally from large cinder cones, have descended slopes in narrow corridors and have fanned out in wide expanses on gentle gradients. Fantastically rough surfaces characterize the flows, which form the Sierra's badlands—agriculturally unproductive and barriers to horse and wheeled traffic. Comparative age of the flows can be roughly determined by the degree of rock decomposition and character of vegetation cover. In some flows, such as that south of Pomacuarán, depressions and crevasses are partially filled with alluvium; large areas are covered with a thin soil mantle; sizable pines and oaks cover most of the flow. These features evidence a long period of exposure. In contrast, the rough, blackened, almost treeless *malpaís* northwest of Zacapu at the Sierra's northern edge, appears to be a much younger flow.

Volcanic activity in the Sierra has possibly been continuous from Eocene to the present day. Jorullo (1759) and Paricutin (1943) represent

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP of P. 3-a ---- Analyst]